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ABSTRACT

This unit in Mexican cooking can be used in Junior High School home economics classes to introduce students to Mexican culture or as a mini-course in Spanish at almost any level. It is divided into two parts. Part One provides historical background and information on basic foods, the Mexican market, shopping tips, regional cooking and customs. Part Two consists of a typical menu and several recipes in Spanish and English. Each recipe lists the Spanish vocabulary and the English equivalent. (AMH)

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Table of Contents

Foreword 1

Part One

- Historical Introduction 1
- Basic Foods in Mexican Cooking 3
- The Mexican Market 4
- Shopping in the U.S.A. 6
- Regional Cooking and Customs 8

Sample Menu 10

Part Two: Recipes

- Champurrado/Chocolate Atole 11
- Bebidas de coco y lima/Coconut-Lime Drinks 12
- Empanadita con almendras/Almond Empanaditas 13
- La Ensalada de Nochebuena/Christmas Eve Salad 14
- Frijoles refritos/Refried Beans 15
- Las Sopaipillas/Puffy Fried Bread 16
- Buñuelos/Fried Sweet Puffs 17
- Enchiladas de res enrolladas/Rolled Enchiladas 18
- Tortillas de harina/Flour Tortillas 20

References 21

Definitions of Typical Mexican Dishes 22

FOREWORD:

This unit can be adapted to fit two needs — in English, the unit can be used in seventh and eighth grade home economics classes to introduce students to Mexican culture; in Spanish, it can be used as a mini-course on almost any level, but preferably on the more advanced levels. The advanced levels seem to be more suitable in that these classes have attained enough basic knowledge of the language to grasp vocabulary quickly.

Part I can be taught in an ordinary classroom with the use of posters and other illustrations. Part II involves the use of a kitchen laboratory and some basic utensils or at the very least a blender, electric frying pan, and portable baking appliances. Most of the recipes can be prepared within a 50-minute class.

The major grammatical objective is new vocabulary; however, the unit also lends itself to a review of the imperative. The material in any text would be suitable for this purpose and could be presented prior to beginning the actual unit. Exercises could be done throughout the unit.

Approximately four weeks before beginning the unit, have the class write to the following companies for the material shown:

Del Monte Foods 215 Freemont St. San Francisco, CA	Del Monte provides a wall chart of the basic four food groups in Spanish.
The Hershey Corporation Hershey, PA 17033	A poster showing the history of chocolate.
Kellogg International International Marketing Kellogg Company Battle Creek, MI 49016	Cereal cartons printed in Spanish.

These materials are all free of charge and are suitable for classroom display.

PART ONE

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

One of the most prevalent misconceptions in the United States concerning Hispanic cooking is that it is all alike. Nothing could be further from the truth: each country, each region has been affected by a number of disparate influences. Just as Southern-style cooking in the United States is quite different from that of the Pennsylvania Dutch on the Atlantic coast, Mexican cooking is quite different from that of the other Hispanic countries.

In Mexico, there has evolved a subtle blend of the food cultures of the early Spanish conquerors (themselves influenced by centuries of Moorish domination), the Aztec and Maya Indians, and the French imperialists from the time of Maximilian and Carlota. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, the historian of Cortez's expeditions of conquest, noted the chocolate, vanilla, corn, chiles, peanuts, tomatoes, avocadoes, squash, beans, sweet potatoes, pineapple, and papaya native to the diet of the Aztecs. Chocolate mixed with water was a favorite drink of the Aztec nobility. The cocoa beans were used as currency among the tribes and the drink

itself had both royal and religious status--only men of high rank were allowed to sip it. Chocolate became popular throughout Europe after the Spaniards discovered that sugar made the sour Aztec beverage much more acceptable to Old World palates.

The conquerors, who returned to Europe laden with seeds and cuttings, had brought with them to the New World oil and wine, cinnamon and cloves, rice and wheat, peaches and apricots, and cattle, sheep, and chickens. Many of these comestibles had come to Spain during the years of Arab control. Still later, in the years 1864-67, dishes of French, Austrian, and Italian origin were introduced in Mexico.

Corn, chiles, tomatoes, and beans were (and still are) the basis of the Aztec and Mayan cuisines. Corn and the dieties of corn were a central part of the pre-Christian religions.

In his descriptions of the main market in Tenochtitlán, the ancient Aztec capital, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, a Spanish priest, noted foods that have changed very little with the passage of time— tortillas, tamallis, (now tamales), tacos, and quesadillas. Although Mexico has been influenced by immigrants from many countries, and by the mass media, the people, food, and customs have retained their distinctly Mexican character.

CULTURAL CONCEPT:

It is essential to stress from the beginning that the cuisine of Mexico is a part of its culture. It has been influenced by the same factors that determined the language, class structure, government, religion, and history of Mexico, and must be considered from this standpoint.

VOCABULARY:

la quesadilla-turnover made by stuffing unbaked tortillas with a variety of fillings, pinching the edges together, and frying them golden brown.

el taco-small tortilla stuffed with various mixtures, rolled, and fastened.

el tamal-rich dough, rolled and stuffed with various fillings, then steamed in dried cornhusks.

la tortilla-thin, round, flat cake made of corn or wheat flour, the 'bread' of Mexico.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

(1) Since this is the preliminary to the actual cooking section, this first lesson is a good time to do some investigative shopping. Assign two or three students to check different grocery stores, import houses, and other places that might stock the necessary items for later in the unit.

(2) Assign various students to report on the Arab influence on Spanish foods, and thus indirectly on Mexico; the Aztec and Mayan rituals concerning corn, chocolate, and other foods; and the European contributions to Mexican foods during the reign of Maximilian and Carlota. This may involve some library research on your part to check the availability of source material.

Assignments for suggested activities for the most part should be made before the presentation of the unit so that the reports can be made the same day as the pertinent lesson material. Students may be at a loss as to where to begin looking for some of this information, so it is wise to have a few suggestions ready.

BASIC FOODS IN MEXICAN COOKING

The basic ingredients of Mexican cooking are much the same as they were hundreds of years ago. The corn, beans, chiles, fruits, and vegetables cultivated by the Aztecs still constitute the basic Mexican diet.

Corn is to Mexico what rice is to the Orient. The fresh grain is used in a variety of dishes. Masa (ground dried corn) is the basis for tortillas (the bread of Mexico), tamales, numerous other dishes, and even a beverage—atole. Nothing is wasted, as even the husks are used as wrappers for tamales. The cooking techniques involved in the various corn dishes are somewhat different from ours. Though not difficult, they are the key to authentic-tasting results. (These methods will be explained in the recipes as needed.)

No Mexican meal is considered complete without beans, whether cooked and served separately, or refritos (mashed and fried) and used as a garnish. They come in a wide range of size, color, and shape. The most popular are the frijol negro (black bean) and the frijol pinto (speckled bean). Cooked beans are served separately in bowls, after the meat course and before the sweets, at the main meal of the day. They may be served at breakfast with tortillas de harina (flour tortillas) and mantequilla (butter). These rather soupy beans are cooked in quantity and kept on hand to use in various dishes.

The chiles are probably the food that people everywhere consider characteristically Mexican. There are an estimated sixty-one classified varieties in Mexico alone, and they come sweet, pungent, and/or hot. Obviously, one could go into great detail about chiles, but knowledge of a few basic ones is sufficient for most recipes. Those used most frequently fit into two groups: the red, used dried; and the green, used fresh. The ripe red bell pepper and the sweet, red pimiento are the exceptions. These are always used fresh, never dried. The red chiles are generally mild, although some are extremely hot and pungent. The green chiles are usually hotter than the red ones.

Tomatoes turn up in Mexican dishes almost as often as chiles do. The red tomato, the 'xictomatl' of the Aztec, in Mexico jitomate, is available all year. Canned Italian plum tomatoes are a good substitute if the available fresh tomatoes are not ripe.

Other basic ingredients include lard as a cooking fat, finely ground nuts for thickening sauces, and herbs and spices such as anise, cumin, cinnamon, and clove. Less familiar ingredients to the U.S. cook are cilantro (fresh green coriander), piloncillo (Mexican brown sugar), chorizo (Spanish hot sausage), and plátano macho (a type of large banana which needs cooking to be edible).

Any well-equipped kitchen will probably have all the utensils and appliances needed in the preparation of Mexican food, although a blender is a must. The traditional cazuelas (earthenware casseroles) and ollas (pots) may be supplanted by aluminum, enamelled iron, or stainless steel utensils. A tortilla press can be constructed, or bought at most import houses. An iron griddle or large skillet can be substituted for the comal (earthenware baking sheet). Thus, although there is a traditional method, substitutions may be made successfully.

CULTURAL CONCEPT

The Mexican diet is determined, as is that of most regions, by the food crops that will thrive in its climate. The inexpensive and readily available items—corn, beans, and chiles—are the staples of the people's diet. This is a factor of economy as well as of climate: Mexico has a large number of people subsisting on very small incomes, thus, a plentiful supply of food must be obtained for a small outlay of cash.

VOCABULARY:

el atole-a drink made with water, masa, sugar, and milk

la cazuela-eathenware casserole

el cilantro-fresh green coriander

el comal-earthenware baking sheet

el chorizo-hot sausage

el frijol negro-black bean

el frijol pinto-speckled bean

la mantequilla-butter

la masa-fresh, this is a moist dough of ground 'Nixtamal' (dried corn) which has been soaked in limewater and then cooked.

la olla-earthenware pot

el piloncillo-Mexican brown sugar

el plátano macho-banana

refrito-thoroughly fried

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

(1) Acquaint students with basic ingredients by displaying those you may be using later. This is a follow-up to Activity #1 in Lesson I.

(2) Assign groups of students to look up the words for kitchen utensils, typical foods, names of appliances, measurements, etc. Although the recipes are given in both languages, this will help them to remember the new vocabulary more easily. They can use the information to create posters and charts that can be displayed in the class throughout the unit.

THE MEXICAN MARKET

The Mexican open-air markets are an integral part of almost every town. At these markets, one can buy fresh produce, hand-made or manufactured articles, and just about any other type of marketable goods.

Among the vegetables familiar to the American shopper, in addition to those of Indian origin already mentioned, are carrots, spinach, lettuce, beets, celery, watercress, parsley, and both sweet and white potatoes. Fruits include oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, pomegranates, and limas (limes). One would also find large melon-sized papayas, yellow and red bananas, several varieties of mangoes, and the guavas and passion fruit normally associated with Hawaii.

Other types of exotic vegetables and fruits abound: the papaya-shaped, apple-green chayote squash; the large gray-brown root jícama; the sweet huacamote, a kind of yucca which is eaten cooked; nopales, the leaves of prickly pear cactus; guanábana, the heart-shaped spiny soursop which makes an excellent conserve; and tuna, cactus fruit whose moist flesh is eaten raw or candied, and which is used in salads and drinks. Still other curiosities are bunches of herbs, various dried plants used to make tea or other drinks, and pumpkin and melon seeds for making beverages and sauces.

The markets also have vendors selling tacos, raw jícama or oranges, whole coconuts with straws inserted, trays of candy, and fresh bread. These vendors may be stationary or may transport their wares on small carts. The vendor of goat milk leads his nanny goat through the streets and milks it to order.

The myriad sights of the market are fascinating, but even more interesting is the custom of regateando—bargaining, an essential part of any trip to the market. The merchants rarely post fixed prices for their wares. Instead, they size up each potential customer and quote the price they hope to get—with room left for bargaining. In Mexican bargaining, neither buyer nor seller raises his voice; the transaction is limited to hopeful offers and quiet refusals accompanied by restrained gestures. Whoever buys without attempting to pay considerably less than the asking price is looked upon as not being smart. The bargaining process is an indispensable part of almost any transaction, sanctified by tradition and beloved by client and merchant alike.

The metric system of weights and measures is used in Mexico. The measurements used in the recipes within the unit are both English and metric, to familiarize the students with both systems.

CULTURAL CONCEPT

In the market place, sellers use shrewd tactics in praising the value of their merchandise. They are very forward and outgoing when approaching potential customers. The clever buyer will use great care to betray no interest in a given item and will offer a price somewhat lower than he thinks fair. Also, he will make an effort to point out flaws in the articles and make the seller believe he is indifferent. When the merchant refuses his best offer he casually begins to stroll away. If he is called back for a reconsidered price, he can be reasonably sure of making a fair buy.

VOCABULARY:

el chayote-papaya-shaped, apple-green squash

la chirimoya-a relative of the soursop; sweeter and eaten raw

la flor de calabaza-squash blossom cooked as a vegetable or used as a garnish

la granadilla-a type of fruit

la guanábana-heart-shaped, spiny soursop

el huacamote-sweet variety of yucca, eaten cooked

la jícama-large, gray-brown root

la lima-lime

el mamey-a type of fruit

el nopal-leaf of prickly pear cactus with taste and texture something like green beans

regatear-to bargain

la romerita-vegetable resembling rosemary

la tuna-cactus, eaten raw with lemon and sugar, or candied

la verdolaga-a vegetable/garden weed, purslane

el zapote-a type of fruit

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

(1) Have a student who is good in math present a brief discussion of the metric system, concentrating on weights and measures.

(2) In a brief paragraph (Spanish or English), ask the students to give their impressions of the marketplace and the process of bargaining.

(3) Working in groups of two or three, students compose a five- or six-line dialogue between buyers and sellers in a Mexican market.

SHOPPING IN THE U.S.A.

It may require a bit of detective work to locate some items needed for your Mexican recipes. Gourmet food departments in large supermarkets, department stores, and delicatessens are good places to search. Supermarkets near universities with foreign students, or in areas where minority groups tend to live, are the best possibilities. Telephone ahead to check whether a certain item is stocked; if a store doesn't carry it, the clerk may be able to tell you who does. Telephoning saves time, gasoline, and wear and tear on your nerves.

Once you get to the store, it may require some real perseverance to find the products you want. Tortillas may be with the frozen foods, canned green chiles near the olives and pickles, red chile sauce beside the tomato paste, and chick-peas with the canned beans and peas. Ask the manager where you might find what you want. If he doesn't stock it, he may order it if you let him know there is a demand.

Perhaps the best way to locate Mexican foods is to ask a Mexican where to shop. You may inquire at Mexican restaurants, and may even find that the owner will sell you what you need out of his supplies.

For your convenience in shopping, some of the more common ingredients are listed below. Those items indicated by (A) can be found at almost all markets; (B) items can be found at large supermarkets or smaller stores which stock a variety of the foreign foods most in demand; (C) items will probably only be sold at supermarkets with large gourmet departments, gourmet food shops, or Mexican groceries, and (D) items probably only at Mexican groceries or markets in areas of large Mexican population.

Atole (D)
Some Mexican markets now sell foil packets of instant atole to which water or milk is added.

Beans (A)
Cooked red, kidney, pinto, garbanzo beans, and prepared refried beans come in cans.
(B)
Dried black beans and garbanzos (chick-peas) are a little more difficult to find.

Cheese (A)
Jack cheese, Parmesan, Romano, and Cheddar make very good substitutes for various Mexican cheeses. Longhorn Cheddar has melting qualities much like cheese used in Mexico.

Chiles (A)
Most are easy to find.

Chocolate (C)
Cinnamon-flavored, sweetened Mexican chocolate is sold in cakes. Can be used to make champurrado.

Chorizo (C)
Highly seasoned link sausages.

Cinnamon (D)
Mexican stick cinnamon is a little different in flavor from that usually sold in the United States

Enchilada Sauce (A-B)
The red sauce made of mild chile pulp used for enchiladas is put up in cans by a number of companies. You can also make your own from scratch.

Green Chile Salsa (A-B)
A relish sauce of tomatoes, onions, and mild green chiles sold in cans or jars.

Masa Harina (C-D)
Fresh masa is found usually only at Mexican stores or restaurants. If you can find it, buy only as much as you will use, as it does not keep well. A more widely used form of masa in the United States is a flour of dehydrated masa, sometimes also called corn tortilla or tamale flour. You just add water to it. If this is not available in your area, write to: Miss Lois Ross, Director of Home Economics, The Quaker Oats Company, Merchandise Mart Plaza, Chicago, Illinois 60654.

Mole (C-D)
Mole is a sauce used for meat and poultry, made with chiles, various spices, and sometimes chocolate. Often crushed sesame seed, pumpkin seed, or nuts are incorporated for flavor and thickening. Follow the directions on the can or jar to make the sauce.

Nopales (C-D)
The leaves or pads of the prickly pear cactus are sometimes sold fresh, and more often canned or in jars (called napolitos). They can be used as a vegetable or in soups, salads, and omelets.

Piloncillo (D)
Brown, unrefined cane sugar in small, hard, cone-shaped loaves used for sweetening coffee and desserts.

Taco Sauce (A)
Numerous canned and bottled sauces to use with tacos are sold. These contain either red or green tomatoes, chiles, vinegar, onions, and seasonings.

Tuna (C)
Cactus fruit good for dessert.

If you still have trouble obtaining ingredients, these stores sell, and will mail, foods needed for Mexican cooking: (Information as of August 1978)

B. Altman & Co., Fifth Avenue and 34th Street, New York, NY 10016 - canned chiles, and other prepared foods. (The customer pays postage and handling.)

Casa Moneo, 210 West 14th Street, New York, NY 10011 (Mimimum order $15.00, plus postage, handling, and insurance.)

Casa Esteiro Spanish-Latin-American Products, 2719 West Division, Chicago, IL 60622 (Customer pays postage and handling.)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

(1) Have students write to mail-order houses to obtain price lists and mailing information.

(2) Have two or three students contact local restaurants to determine which items are available, or have them contact Mexican families in the neighborhood.

REGIONAL COOKING AND CUSTOMS

Though each state in Mexico boasts special dishes, the regional pattern is dictated more by climate than anything else. Yucatán, with the distinctive cuisine of the Mayas, is the exception.

The arid north is not really corn country, and it is here that the influence of Spain is the strongest. Good food depends more on the excellence of the raw ingredients than on the delicacy or complexity of a sauce. Cabrita asada (roast kid), accompanied by wheat, corn, tortillas, beans, guacamole, and chili sauce is a magnificent dinner if the kid is tender and of good quality.

The tropical coastal regions abound in fish, seafood, and tropical fruits, but fundamentally there is little difference between the cuisine of the coast and that of the high plateau. For example, in Oaxaca, banana leaves are used for tamales, instead of corn husks as elsewhere; but the recipes all follow the same basic pattern.

The customary meals and times for eating them developed out of the work schedule of the rural people, with some consideration of Spanish habits. The old ways are still closely followed in the country; however, in the cities, changes have taken place to suit the demands of business routine.

In the country, desayuno (breakfast) is a light meal, eaten shortly after dawn, and provides enough nourishment to tide a person over while doing early chores. Later in the morning, almuerzo (a breakfast of fortifying foods) is eaten, undoubtedly to give energy for heavy work.

As in most farm areas throughout the world, the big meal of the day is the midday one. In Mexico, this comida generally begins about 2 p.m. The multi-course lunch may last for several hours and be followed by a siesta. The later lunch hour and siesta are Spanish-influenced customs, well suited to areas where it is wise to rest during the heat of the day.

Very late in the afternoon or early evening, a snack or light supper called the merienda is eaten. A real supper (cena) is served at home long after the sun has set. A late meal in a restaurant may be called a comida if it qualifies as the main meal of the day. The custom of eating into the late evening hours is also Spanish.

Today in the cities, the pattern has changed. Office workers may take almuerzo as a coffee break or, if they have missed breakfast, as a sort of fashionable brunch. Their comida may be much lighter, without a siesta following, because some businesses no longer close for the siesta hour. The merienda is becoming any kind of light meal eaten in the evening.

The feeling exists that it isn't healthful to eat much at night, particularly in places like Mexico City, where the altitude is great. However, more and more people are having larger meals then, often at restaurants or at dinner parties.

The large cities are sophisticated places, with numerous continental and other foreign restaurants which serve past midnight. Many people live much according to the same patterns which have become almost international in urban centers everywhere. Nevertheless, customs do not change radically overnight: the main meal is still the comida, and the meal times are definitely later than they are in North America.

CULTURAL CONCEPT

In Mexico, the diets of the upper and lower classes are quite different. Whereas the upper class can afford to buy protein-rich foods, the lower class infrequently eats meat or even vegetables, instead, they consume low-cost beans and tortillas almost exclusively. Hot peppers are used freely, both as a seasoning and as part of the main meal. Sauces are made from peppers for use on just about any kind of food, from eggs to meats and vegetables. Mexicans tend not to have much of a 'sweet tooth.' Their emphasis is not on dessert, but on the main part of the meal. Coffee is the most popular and widely used beverage; however, neither coffee nor milk is commonly served with meals. Water or wine is consumed with meals; coffee is served afterward. Children are allowed to drink café con leche (hot milk flavored with very strong coffee) most often at breakfast. Panaderías (bakeries) do big business, especially during merienda shopping. Bolillos (hard rolls) are usually purchased just prior to meals. Customarily, fruit is eaten almost exclusively at the midday meal, and sandwiches are only consumed at picnics or parties.

VOCABULARY:

el almuerzo - late breakfast consisting of fortifying foods for heavy work

el bolillo - hard roll, usually shaped like an elongated football

la cabrita - young kid, usually served roasted

la cena - supper, served as late as 8:00 or 10:00 p.m., relatively light

la comida - the main meal of the day, served between 1:00 and 3:30 p.m. Multi-course meal.

el desayuno - the early morning light meal taken before the first chores have to be done

la merienda - afternoon snack or light supper

la panadería - bakery

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

(1) Check encyclopedias for possible regional delicacies. Look under "Mexico: the People."

(2) Make a graph of the hours of the day with two columns. In one column, shade in the customary hours for United States meals. In the other, shade in the hours for Mexican meals. This makes a graphic illustration of the cultural difference.

(3) In short dialogues, assign different students to act out skits about the different meals. They should mention customary foods for the meals and indicate times, etc.

BRASERO

Appetizers

GUACAMOLE DIP 1.95
NACHOS 1.95
CHALUPAS 1.95
JALAPENO BEAN DIP 1.50
CHIMICHANGOS FOR TWO 3.50

Salads

BRASERO SALAD 3.50
[illegible] SALAD 2.50
COMBINATION SALAD 1.35
½ AVOCADO FILLED WITH CRABMEAT 4.25

Combinations

TACO, ENCHILADA, TAMALE, BURRITO, TOSTADA
Choice of any three with Rice and Beans 4.95
Choice of any two with Rice and Beans 3.95
Choice of any one with Rice and Beans 2.95

For Gringos

BROILED SHELL STEAK 7.95
HAMBURGER 2.25
CHEESE BURGER 2.50
(All Served with Lettuce, Tomato)

Beer

CARTA BLANCA (Mexican Light Beer) 1.50
DOS EQUIS (Mexican Dark Beer) 1.50
HEINEKEN 1.50
COORS 1.50
MILLER 1.10
BUD 1.10

Beverages

SODA 60
MILK 60
ICED TEA 65
MEXICAN COFFEE 60
ESPRESSO 1.25
HOT CHOCOLATE 75
ACAPULCO COLD - A Hard Cider and Fruit Juice Sangria
Half Pitcher 2.50
Full Pitcher 4.50

Entradas

All Served with Rice and Beans

CHILI CON CARNE with Beans 2.75
with Rice, Cheese and Onions 3.25
with Sour Cream 2.95
GUACAMOLE TACO, CHEESE ENCHILADA 4.25
Meatless Dinner
BEEF ENCHILADA, BEEF TACO 4.25
Sour Cream Covered
CHORIZO AND VEGETABLE CASSEROLE 4.95
CHILI RELLENOS 5.50
One Beef, One Cheese
EGGS RANCHERO 3.95
ENCHILADA BRASERO 4.95
One Beef, One Cheese Covered with Guacamole
ENCHILADA SUIZAS 5.50
One Cheese, One Chicken, Covered with Green Sauce and Sour Cream
VEGETABLE ENCHILADAS 4.95
Two Mixed Vegetable Enchiladas covered with Melted Cheese and Sour Cream
SHRIMP CON SALSA VERDE 5.95
Shrimp Broiled in Butter and Garlic, Smothered in Green Sauce

CARNITA CON TORTILLAS 6.50

CRAB MEAT ENCHILADAS 6.50
Two Enchiladas filled with Fresh Crab Meat and covered with Cream Sauce
ARROZ CON POLLO 5.95
Chicken and Rice simmered with Tomato, Green Pepper, Onions, Garlic, Olives
CARNE ASADA CON TORTILLAS 6.95
Slices of Steak wrapped in Flour Tortillas with Beans, Onions, Cheese, Special Sauce, Topped with Guacamole

Desserts

HOMEMADE FLAN 1.50

HOMEMADE PECAN PIE 1.50

HOMEMADE BANANA CREAM PIE 1.50

SOPAPILLAS WITH HONEY 1.50

PART TWO: RECIPES

CHAMPURRADO

70 gramos de masa de harina
un poco menos de 3/4 litro de agua
160 gramos de piloncillo
90 gramos de chocolate, rallados
un poco menos de 3/4 litro de leche
un palillo pequeño de canela

Usando 6 centilitros de agua, mezcle el chocolate rallado hasta que se disuelva; ponga éste a un lado. Ponga la masa en una cacerola grande, y revuélvala con el resto del agua. Añada la rajita de canela y cocínelo todo sobre fuego lento, revolviéndolo constantemente, hasta que se espese. Quítelo del fuego y añada el piloncillo, la leche y el chocolate disuelto. Póngalo otra vez al fuego y hiérvalo a fuego lento. Quite la rajita de canela. Bátalo con un molinillo. Sírvalo caliente.

VOCABULARY-CHAMPURRADO:

el agua - water
añadir - to add
batir - to beat
la cacerola - saucepan
la canela - cinnamon
cocinar - to cook
el chocolate - chocolate
disolver - to melt
disuelto - melted
espesar - to thicken
el fuego - heat, fire
hervir a fuego - simmer
la leche - milk
la masa de harina - wheat flour
el molinillo - wooden beater
el palillo - stick
el pedazo - piece
el piloncillo - brown sugar
poner - set, place
quitar - to remove
rallado - grated
revolver - to stir
sacar - discard
uniforme - smooth, uniform consistency

CHOCOLATE ATOLE

½ cup masa harina (all-purpose flour may be substituted)
3 cups water
1 cup brown sugar
3 1-oz. squares unsweetened chocolate, grated
3 cups milk
small piece of cinnamon stick

Using ½ cup of water, melt the grated chocolate until smooth; set aside. Place the masa in a large saucepan, and stir in remaining water. Add the cinnamon stick and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until it has thickened. Remove from heat, and bring to a simmer. Discard the cinnamon stick. Beat lightly and serve. (This can be varied by using 2 cups of water and 4 cups of milk, or 2 cups of water, 3 cups of milk, and 1 cup of cream.)

BEBIDAS DE COCO Y LIMA

1 demilitro de leche de coco
1 decilitro de jugo de lima, fresco
1½ litros de jugo de guayaba y 180 gramos de azúcar o
1 demilitro de jugo de papaya y 120 gramos de azúcar.

Se puede usar leche de coco helada; deshiélela y revuélvala bien (en una licuadora eléctrica).

Con coco en paquete, combine 1 demilitro de coco (rallado) y 6 decilitros de leche fría. Enfríela por una hora. Licúelo bien por unos 40 segundos. Exprímalas bien, sacando 1 demilitro de leche.

Combine la leche, la lima, el jugo de fruta y el azúcar (se puede usar un poco menos u omitirla completamente si el jugo es demasiado dulce). Revuélvalo un poco y sírvalo con hielo inmediatamente.

VOCABULARY - BEBIDAS DE COCO Y LIMA

el coco - coconut
deshelar - to thaw
exprimar - to strain
la guayaba - guava
helado - frozen
la lima - lime
los pedazos - flakes

COCONUT-LIME DRINKS

The delicious coconut milk drinks with lime and tropical fruit juices served in Mexico are a surprise to some tourists who think of such concoctions as Polynesian only.

2 cups coconut milk
½ cup fresh lime juice
6 cups guava nectar and 3/4 cups sugar or
2 cups papaya juice and ½ cup sugar
(test the canned juice for sweetness before adding the sugar as it may not need any sugar)

If you use frozen coconut milk, thaw it and blend before mixing the drink.

To make milk from packaged coconut, combine 2 2/3 cups each of flaked coconut and cold milk; refrigerate 1 hour. Blend for about 40 seconds. Strain through a double thickness of cheesecloth, squeezing out 2 cups milk.

To make fresh milk, drain and crack 1 coconut; taste to make sure it is free from any off flavors. Cut meat in ½-inch cubes. For each cup of cubed meat, add 3/4 cup hot liquid (hot water added to the liquid from the coconut). Blend for 20 or 30 seconds, then steep 30 minutes. Strain through a double thickness of cheesecloth, squeezing out about 2 cups of milk.

With the 2 cups of coconut milk and the lime juice, add either the guava nectar or papaya juice and sugar. (If you make the milk using flaked coconut and whole milk, it may look slightly curdled - but it is all right.) Serve over ice immediately after mixing.

EMPANADITA CON ALMENDRAS

285 gramos de harina
25 gramos de levadura
5 gramos de sal
125 gramos de lardo
1 decilitro de agua fría
115 gramos de almendras blanqueadas y cortadas
120 gramos de azúcar
1½ gramos de canela molida
1 clara de huevo
½ gramo de extracto de almendra

Cierna juntas la harina, la levadura, y la sal. Corte el lardo con la harina usando dos cuchillos hasta que se haga bolas gruesas. Añada el agua poco a poco hasta que la masa forme una bola firme. En una mesa cubierta de harina, extienda la bola con rodillo a una espesura de ½ de un centímetro. Corte la masa en círculos de 6 centímetros.

Mezcle las almendras, el azúcar, y la canela. Bata la clara del huevo con el extracto hasta que esté espumosa; añadala a la mezcla de almendras. Ponga una cucharadita de esta mezcla en una mitad de cada círculo. Moje ligeramente los bordes. Dóblelas; séllelas y entonces fríalas en una pulgada de aceite, volteándolas una vez. Séquelas en toallas.

VOCABULARY - EMPANADITAS CON ALMENDRAS

el borde - edge
la clara de huevo - egg white
doblar - to fold
espumosa - frothy
mojar - to moisten
sellar - to seal

ALMOND EMPANADITAS

Empanadas are a type of turnover that can be filled with meat, fruit, nuts, etc. Miniature ones are called empanaditas. They are especially popular at Christmastime.

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
½ cup shortening
½ to 2/3 cup ice water

Filling:
3/4 cups chopped blanched almonds
½ cup sugar
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 egg white
½ tsp almond extract

Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Cut in shortening till mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add ice water, 1 tbsp at a time, tossing with fork till all flour is moistened. Shape into a ball. On lightly floured surface, roll out to about 1/8 inch thickness. Cut into 2½ inch circles. Mix almonds, sugar, and cinnamon. Beat egg white with almond extract till frothy; stir in almond mixture. Place about 1 tsp filling on half of each circle. Wet edges; seal. Fry, turning once. Drain.

LA ENSALADA DE NOCHEBUENA

8 remolachas pequeñas
4 naranjas, bien peladas
4 manzanas sin pelar, sin corazón
4 plátanos, pelados
1 piña fresca, pelada y sin corazón o una lata 840 gramas de pedazos de piña
3 limas peladas
1 repollo de lechuga
60 gramos de azúcar (se puede omitir)
Las semillas de 2 granadas
150 gramos de cacahuetes, cortados
250 gramos de salsa de mayonesa

Corte toda la fruta; mézclela bien con la salsa mayonesa y enfríela bien. Desmenuce la lechuga y póngala en el fondo de una ensaladera grande. Mezcle la fruta con el azúcar (si quiere) y entonces arréglela sobre la lechuga. Rocíela toda con los cachuetes y las semillas. Para ocho personas.

VOCABULARY - LA ENSALADA DE NOCHEBUENA:

arreglar - to arrange
el corazón - core
cortar - to chop (cortado - chopped)
desmenuzar - to shred
enfriar - to chill
la ensaladera - salad bowl
la granada - pomegranate
la lata - can
la lima - lime
la manzana - apple
mezclar - to mix
la naranja - orange
pelar - to peel
la piña - pineapple
el plátano - banana
la remolacha - sugar beet
el repollo de lechuga - head of lettuce
rociar - to sprinkle
la salsa mayonesa - mayonnaise
las semillas - seeds

CHRISTMAS EVE SALAD

This dish is traditionally served after Christmas Eve Mass accompanied by one of several classic turkey dishes.

8 small cooked beets
4 oranges, peeled (white membrane removed)
4 red apples, cored
4 bananas, peeled
1 fresh pineapple, peeled and cored, or 1 can (1 lb. 14 oz.) pineapple chunks
3 limes, peeled (white membrane removed)
1 head iceberg lettuce
¼ cup sugar (optional)
Seeds of 2 pomegranates
1 cup peanuts, chopped
1 cup mayonnaise

Thinly slice or chop the beets, oranges, apples, bananas, pineapple, and limes. Shred the lettuce and put it in the bottom of a large, shallow bowl. Toss fruits thoroughly in mayonnaise, and arrange over lettuce, sprinkling with the sugar, if you choose to use it. Arrange top layer attractively, perhaps with a ring of oranges around the outer edge, then sprinkle pomegranate seeds and chopped peanuts over all. Serves eight.

FRIJOLES REFRITOS

Se pueden usar los frijoles refritos de lata. Cocínelos con un poco de mantequilla, o con grasa de tocino, y un poco de polvo de chiles. Use fuego lento para no quemarlos. O se pueden hacer según esta receta:

500 gramos de frijoles pintos, secos, limpios
1.2 litros de agua
1 o 2 cebollas de tamaño mediano, rebanadas
125 a 250 gramos de grasa de tocino (caliente), mantequilla o lardo
Sal a su gusto

En una cacerola combine los frijoles con el agua y las cebollas. Hiérvalos, cúbralos, y quítelos del fuego por dos horas. Póngalos de nuevo al fuego, hiérvalos, y entonces cocínelos a fuego lento hasta que los frijoles estén bien blandos, por 3 horas. Aplástelos o presiónelos y añada la grasa de tocino; mézclelo bien y continúe cocinándolos, revolviéndolos hasta que se espesen. Añada sal a su gusto.

VOCABULARY - FRIJOLES REFRITOS

aplastar - to mash
la cebolla - onion
combinar - to combine
hervir - to boil
limpio - clean
polvo de chiles - chili powder
quemar - to burn
seco - dried
tamaño mediano - medium-sized
el tocino - bacon

REFRIED BEANS

To make bean paste you can use the canned variety, heated with a little butter, bacon drippings, or lard if you like more richness. The canned beans improve in flavor and texture if they are stirred in a pan over low heat a few minutes, or even 'refried' with the additional fat. Or you can make your own from the following recipe.

1 pound dried pinto or pink beans, cleaned
5 cups water
1 or 2 medium-sized onions, diced
½ to 1 cup hot bacon drippings, butter, or lard
Salt to taste

Combine beans in a pan with water and onions. Bring to a boil, cover, and remove from heat for 2 hours. Return to heat, bring to a boil, and simmer slowly until beans are very tender, about 3 hours. Mash beans with a potato masher, and add bacon drippings, butter, or lard. Mix well; continue cooking, stirring frequently until beans are thickened and fat is absorbed. Salt to taste. Serve or reheat. Makes 5 to 6 cups.

LAS SOPAIPILLAS

570 gramos de harina
6 gramos de sal
13 gramos de levadura
45 gramos de azúcar
30 gramos de lardo
leche (acerca de .3 litro)
aceite de ensaladas para freírlas

Cierna la harina una vez; añada la sal, la levadura y el azúcar y ciérnala de nuevo. Añada el lardo, cortándolo en la harina con dos cuchillos. Añada la leche poco a poco para hacer una masa firme. Cubra la cazuela y permita qe la masa quede durante 30 o 60 minutos. Entonces extiéndala con un espeso de ¼ centímetro en una mesa cubierta con un poco de harina. Córtelo en pedazos en forma de diamante.

Caliente una pulgada de aceite en una sartén a una temperatura de 190° o 193°. Añada unos pocos pedazos a la vez y voltéelas una vez para que se hinchen bien. Entonces deje que se pongan doradas por los dos lados. Séquelas en una toalla de papel. Sírvalas con mantequilla o con miel. Esta receta hace 4 docena o más.

VOCABULARY - SOPAIPILLAS

el aceite - oil
calentar - to heat
cernir - to sift
la espesura - thickness
freír - to fry
hincharse - to puff up
la levadura - baking powder
la miel - honey
la sartén - frying pan
secar -to drain
una toalla de papel - paper towel
voltear - to turn

PUFFY FRIED BREAD

The key to good 'sopaipillas' is to allow the dough to stand for the full 30 to 60 minutes indicated in the recipe. For this recipe, you can mix the dough that morning before class (it takes about 15 minutes) so it will be ready to be rolled out and fried during class.

4 cups regular all-purpose flour
1½ teaspoons salt
3 teaspoons baking powder
3 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons shortening
Milk (about 1½ cups)
Salad oil for deep frying

Sift flour, measure, and sift again with the salt, baking powder, and sugar. Cut in the shortening, and add milk to make a soft dough just firm enough to roll. Cover bowl and let dough stand for 30 to 60 minutes; then roll ¼ inch thick on lightly floured board and cut in diamond-shaped pieces.

Heat about 1 inch of oil in a frying pan to about 370° to 380°. Add a few pieces of dough at a time; turn at once so they will puff evenly, then turn back to brown both sides. Drain on paper toweling. Serve with butter or tear off one corner, dribble honey inside and serve. Makes four dozen.

BUÑUELOS

500 gramos de harina
5 gramos de sal
4 gramos de levadura
23 gramos de azúcar
125 gramos de mantequilla
2 huevos
1 decilitro de leche
aceite de ensalada para freírlos
Para cubrirlos: 240 gramos de azúcar y 2½ gramos de canela

En una cacerola grande, cierna la harina una vez, entonces ciérnala de nuevo añadiendo la sal, la levadura, y el azúcar. Añada la mantequilla y mézclela con la harina hasta que se hagan polítas gruesas. Bata los huevos con la leche y entonces añada ésto a la mezcla de harina y revuelva hasta que la masa esté firme. Ponga la masa en una mesa cubierta de un poco de harina y amásela por dos minutos. Divida la masa en bolitas del tamaño de canicas.

Espere unos quince minutos y entonces extienda las bolas con un rodillo en la mesa en forma de una hojuela de 10 centímetros. Haga un agujero en el centro con un dedal. Ponga los círculos entre hojas de papel encerado mientras prepara el aceite.

Cocínelos en aceite bien caliente (192°) hasta que se hinchen y se pongan tostados. Séquelos en toallas de papel.

Para cubrirlos, mezcle el azúcar y la canela en una bolsa de papel. Ponga los buñuelos calientes uno a uno en la bolsa y sacúdalo un poco para cubrirlo con la mezcla de azúcar y canela. Sírvalos inmediatamente.

VOCABULARY - BUÑUELOS

el aceite - oil
el agujero - hole
amasar - to knead
la canica - marble
cernir - to sift
el dedal - thimble
freír - to fry
grueso - coarse
hincharse - to puff up
la hojuela - pancake
el huevo - egg
la levadura - baking powder
la mezcla - mixture
la miga - crumb
sacudir - to shake
secar - to drain
tostado - toasted, golden brown

FRIED SWEET PUFFS

3 1/3 cups regular all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1½ tablespoons sugar
¼ cup butter or margarine
2 eggs
½ cup milk
salad oil for deep frying
1 cup sugar and one tablespoon cinnamon, mixed

Sift flour, measure, then sift again with salt, baking powder, and sugar into a bowl. Add butter and rub into flour with your fingertips until mixture is like coarse meal. Beat eggs lightly with milk, then pour into flour mixture and stir until dough forms a solid mass. Turn dough out onto board, and knead lightly for 2 minutes or until smooth. Cut dough into balls the size of marbles and let stand 15 minutes.

Roll each ball on a lightly floured board into a very thin pancake 4 inches in diameter. Cut a hole in the center with a thimble. After you roll out the circles of dough, place them in a single layer on waxed paper until you are ready to cook.

Fry in hot deep fat (375°) until puffed and golden brown, about 30 seconds on each side. Drain on paper towels. Makes 6 dozen.

One at a time put the buñuelos in a paper bag with the sugar-cinnamon mixture. Shake gently to coat. Serve warm.

ENCHILADAS DE RES ENROLLADAS

500 gramos de carne de vaca, molida
1 cebolla de tamaño mediano, cortada
6 centilitros de salsa de chile rojo

En una sartén, deshebrar la carne y fríala bien. Añada la cebolla y cocínela hasta que esté blanda. Añada la salsa y hiérvalo a fuego lento unos 10 minutos, revolviéndola un poco. Póngalo al lado.

16 tortillas de maíz
aceite o lardo para freírlas
3/5 litro de salsa de chile rojo
335 gramos de cebolla tajada
300 gramos de queso rallado

Fría la tortilla en un poco de aceite por unos segundos hasta que este suave. Sáquela del aceite y póngala en la salsa bien calentado (se puede calentarla - no hervirla- en una cacerola pequeña.) Ponga la tortilla en una tartera y ponga unas cucharadas de la carne ya preparada en el centro de un lado al otro de la tortilla. Echele o rocíele con 2 cucharaditas de la cebolla y 2 cucharadas del queso. Enrollela alrededor de la mezcla de carne, cebolla, y queso y póngala con los extremos hacia abajo en la tartera. Vierta bastante salsa sobre las enchiladas para cubrirlas un poco. Rocíelas con el queso que queda. Cocínelas al horno a 190° por 15 o 20 minutos.

VOCABULARY - ENCHILADAS DE RES ENROLLADAS

abajo -upside down
cocinar - to cook
la cucharada - tablespoon
la cucharadita - teaspoon
enrollar - to roll
freír - to fry
el horno - oven
quebrar - to break
rociar - to sprinkle
sacar - take out
la tartera - baking dish
verter - to pour

ROLLED ENCHILADAS

In Mexico, enchiladas are served immediately after they are assembled. The American way is to pour additional sauce over the dish and bake it long enough to heat all the ingredients through. This means the enchiladas can be assembled well ahead of time, and reheated at the last minute.

This recipe is more suited to the ingredients you will probably find in your area than the truly traditional recipe.

1 pound lean ground beef
1 or 2 tablespoons salad oil (optional)
1 medium-sized onion, chopped
½ cup red chile sauce (or canned enchilada sauce)

In a frying pan, break apart and brown the ground beef, adding the salad oil if needed. Add onion and cook until soft. Drain. Moisten with red chile sauce or enchilada sauce. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set aside.

16 corn tortillas
Salad oil or lard for frying tortillas
About 2½ cups red chile sauce or enchilada sauce
3/4 cups chopped onion
3 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese

Dip each tortilla into medium hot shallow oil. Fry just a few seconds, until it begins to blister and become limp. Remove and dip into heated red chile sauce. Lay the sauce-dipped tortilla out in the baking dish you plan to use.

Spoon about 3 tablespoons of the ground beef mixture down the center of the tortilla, and sprinkle with about 2 teaspoons of onion and 2 tablespoons of cheese. Roll the tortilla around the filling and place, flap side down, in the ungreased baking dish. Place the filled enchiladas side by side in the pan.

Pour enough sauce over the enchiladas to moisten the entire surface of the casserole. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake uncovered in a 350° oven for 15 or 20 minutes, or until hot throughout. Makes 16.

TORTILLAS DE HARINA

Una tortilla de harina bien cocida, permanece blanca por la mayor parte, pero se esponja. Parece seca pero todavía está flexible y blanda.

285 gramos de harina no cernida
5 gramos de sal
65 gramos de lardo
1 decilitro de agua tibia

Ponga la harina en una cacerola honda y grande, échele con la sal y revuelva para mezclar. Con dos cuchillos, corte el lardo y la harina hasta que se hagan pedacitos finos. Añada el agua gradualmente; mézclelo bien con un tenedor para hacer una masa firme. Haga una bola y amásela bien, hasta que sea uniforme con burbujitas de aire.

En este punto, se puede engrasar la masa, cubrirla bien, y enfriarla 24 horas antes de usarla. Si se hace así, la masa es mejor. Deje que la masa vuelva a la temperatura del cuarto antes de extenderla en el rodillo.

Divida la masa en once bolas y extiéndalas entre hojas de papel encerado o deles palmaditas entre las manos usando la harina que sea necesaria. Cocine la tortilla en un comal bien caliente hasta que se esponje por un lado. Voltéela y cocínela del otro lado. Sírvalas inmediatamente con mantequilla o frijoles.

VOCABULARY - TORTILLAS DE HARINA

amasar - to knead
la bola - ball
la burbujita - bubble
la cacerola - bowl
el comal - baking sheet
cortar - to cut
cuarto - fourth
el cuchillo - knife
delgada - thin
extender - roll out
formar - to form
hincharse - to puff up
hondo - deep
el lardo - lard
la mantequilla - butter
la masa - dough
media - half
mezclar - to mix
no cernido - unsifted
el papel encerado - waxed paper
parecer - seem
permanecer - remain
rociar - to sprinkle
el rodillo - rolling pin
la sal - salt
seca - dry
el tenedor - fork
tibio - lukewarm
voltear - turn

FLOUR TORTILLAS

One of the true 'sounds of Mexico' is the pat-pat-pat of tortillas being made by hand. Deceptively simple in appearance, this method of making tortillas is almost an art. For a really interesting lesson, mix the dough as directed below and allow the students to pat out their own tortillas. Or if you prefer and have a tortilla press, press them out between sheets of waxed paper. The resulting product can be eaten with butter or with a bean paste made according to the instructions in the following recipe. A properly cooked flour tortilla remains mostly white, but is flecked with brown and puffed in spots; it has a dry look but still is soft and pliable.

2 cups unsifted flour
1 teaspoon salt
¼ cup lard
½ cup lukewarm water

Put flour in mixing bowl, sprinkle with salt, stir to mix. With pastry blender or two knives, cut in lard until particles are fine. Add water gradually; toss with a fork to make a stiff dough. Form into a ball and knead thoroughly until smooth and flecked with air bubbles on a lightly floured board.

Grease the surface of the dough, cover tightly, and refrigerate for as long as 24 hours before using; if you do this, the dough will be easier to handle. Let dough return to room temperature before you begin to roll it out.

Divide dough into 11 or 12 balls and roll between sheets of waxed paper to 8 inches in diameter. (Or pat out, or use a tortilla press.)

Drop onto a very hot ungreased griddle. Cook until freckled on one side (about 20 seconds). Lift edge with spatula, turn, and bake on second side. Serve at once with butter.

REFERENCES

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BRASERO

GUACAMOLE	Fresh Avocados Mixed with Spices, Onions, Lemon Juice, and Tomatoes to Form a Dip.
NACHOS	Crisp Tortilla Chips Covered with Refried Beans, Spicy Beef, Cheese and Topped with Sauce and Onions.
CHALUPAS	Crisp Tortilla Chips Covered with Refried Beans, Melted Cheese and Guacamole.
TACO	Crisp Tortilla Sandwich Made with Your Choice of Beef or Chicken and Covered with Cheese, Onions, Lettuce and Tomato.
ENCHILADA	Soft Tortilla Stuffed with Your Choice of Chicken or Beef or Cheese and Topped with Cheddar Cheese, Homemade Sauce and Lettuce.
TAMALE	Corn Meal Stuffed with Beef, Steamed in a Corn Husk and Served with Chili Sauce.
BURRITO	A Flour Tortilla Filled with Beans, Beef, Cheese and Onions.
TOSTADA	Flat Crisp Tortilla Covered with Beans, Beef, Cheese, Lettuce, Tomato and Onion.
EGGS RANCHERO	Spicy Fried Eggs served with Rice, Beans, Avocado Slices and Sausage.
CHILI RELLENOS	Two Fresh Peppers Stuffed with Cheese and Beef, Dipped in Corn Batter and Deep Fried.
ARROZ CON POLLO	Chicken Cooked Together with Rice, Fresh Tomatoes, Peppers, Onions, Pimentos, Bacon and Spices.
FLAN	A Dessert - Caramel Custard.
ACAPULCO COLD	Hard Cider - Grape Juice and Fruits.